

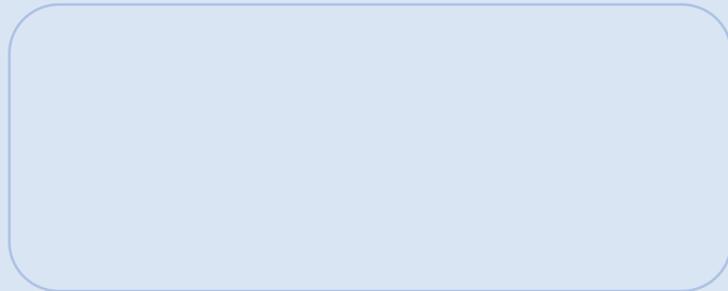
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VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 9

GROWING A COMMUNITY GARDEN FOR THE FUTURE



ACT FOR PEACE

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER
THROUGH THE **actalliance**

The international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Peel gently to open

Peel gently to open



When category 5 Cyclone Pam tore through Vanuatu on 13 March 2015 it damaged at least 90% of houses in the capital Port Vila. Thanks to your generous donations, in the immediate aftermath, Act for Peace and the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC) distributed food, water and tarpaulins to those in need. A further 2,000 personal hygiene kits and 105 community water purification kits were distributed to schools and aid posts to ensure people had access to clean drinking water.

Thanks to your kind, on-going support, the new urban food garden project has been a successful endeavour. Our partner, the VCC, distributes seedlings so that local communities can grow their own food and not solely rely on emergency relief supplies. To date, more than 46kg of seeds, 10,000 seedlings plus training and tools have been provided to communities to ensure the best results for farming.

Nurseries and community gardens have been established so that people can feed themselves and their families and start to earn an income, helping communities get back on their feet. It is proving to be a real and lasting change in the local population for providing their own nutritious vegetables and not being reliant on imported canned or packaged foods. Our plan for the future is to expand the venture into villages on outlying islands.

Your support is making a difference:



Can provide a variety of vegetable seeds to start seedlings in the demonstration garden.



Can provide a community group with essential garden tools to maintain their garden.



Can provide a community with water drums to ensure gardens are watered during dry months and drought periods.

All gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Would you prefer to receive your Peace Mails by email?

Please call or email us and we can set this up for you immediately.
Free call **1800 025 101** or **info@actforpeace.org.au**

Thank you for your ongoing support. This new project is only made possible through your generous gifts.

From Act for Peace we wish you Happy Easter. "...but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.'" Luke 24.5 (NRSV)

Act for Peace

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Dear Friend,

It has now been one year since Cyclone Pam devastated our island nation. So much has happened and I am writing to tell you how you have made a difference in our lives every day. Thank you, neighbours!

I am Annick and I work for Act for Peace's partner – the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC). We are based in the city of Port Vila. Apart from the huge loss of homes, many people also lost their jobs as a result of Cyclone Pam. Most hotels, cafes and restaurants in Port Vila closed and if you were employed in hospitality there was no work. This led to many people being without food. And food was already scarce since most of the food gardens that would usually supply the markets were destroyed. At VCC we saw the urgent need for food and an on-going reliable food source. Thanks to your kind support, we set about providing the community with food security.

In June 2015 we established a demonstration urban food garden on our land. Firstly, we built a nursery and prepared the soil, then we planted seeds of tomatoes, carrots, beans, corn, capsicums, lettuce, pumpkins, cabbage and watermelon. Once seedlings sprung they were harvested and taken away by locals to be replanted to create another urban food garden for a local community. Each urban food garden can typically provide food for three to five families.

To ensure the new gardens are successful, community members need to complete our training to ensure the seedlings are properly cared for before they take them home. In the course, people are taught how to develop a nursery plot, prepare soil, plant seeds, mulch the plants and control pests. Communities, together, learn how a simple work plan operates on a daily basis and how to maintain the garden through the seasons for the optimal harvest.

Before the cyclone, many in Port Vila hadn't seen the value in home gardening because they relied on the markets for food. This mindset is changing as people realise they need to have access to their own food source, so when disasters such as Cyclone Pam strike they can reduce the likelihood of food shortages for their families.

As a local volunteer trainer explained: "People come here to observe, ask questions and learn how to develop a small urban garden of their own. It is important that this home gardening idea must spread throughout Port Vila because after the cyclone, produce was very expensive to buy and in very short supply. Many families had to do without. VCC provides women with a good opportunity to learn how to develop their own plots, and to participate in programs that support women and youth in learning basic livelihood skills. VCC now stands as a role model, people come here to observe and learn how a working home garden would be developed."

Thank you for making our garden – and community – grow.

Annick



Annick teaching gardening skills



Communities learn about an urban food garden